

[Mrs. Amanda E. Lockered]

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FOLKLORE — White Pioneers

Miss Effie Cowan, P.W.

McLennan County, Texas

District No. 8

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“Interview with Mrs. Amanda E. Lockered, Chilton, Texas

“I was born in Falls County in 1856. My parents were Newton B. and Susan [eathers?] Maxey. Father was born May 6, 1832 in Kentucky, while mother was born in Indiana. To them were born seven children, namely: Billie Maxey, of Marlin, Texas, Deceased; Steve Maxey of Chilton, deceased; John D. Maxey, Lorena, Texas, deceased; Mrs. Dicey Hyden, Chilton, Texas, deceased; Mrs. Mattie Shields of Mart, Texas, and Albert Maxey of Waco, are still living, the only two besides myself left of this large family.

“During the Civil War father served under the Confederate flag, and was stationed at Calveston, Texas. He was home on a sick furlough when the war closed. He came to Texas about the year 1851 or '52. There were five families who came through driving oxen to their wagon train. They were all from Missouri, and were the Dixons, [rahams?], [McCutchans?], Maxeys and [Weathers?]. The daughter of Mr. [Weathers?], Susan, being

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my mother. They crossed the Brazos river at the Falls of the Brazos, and located in the settlement now known as Chilton.

“Father built a log house south of where the depot now stands. He was the first white settler in the present town of Chilton. The nearby settlements were Durango to the southwest, and old Carolina to the south, and Mooreville five miles northwest. The county was wild and unsettled, we all lived in log cabins. The roads were just cow trails and when we needed any supplies we sent our produce— corn, hogs and later on cotton, to [Millikens?], where they were exchanged for farming implements, clothes and groceries. C - 12. Tex. 2 They drove through in the ox-drawn wagons and would be gone from five to six weeks.

“Another early settlement over towards Marlin was Cedar Springs, so called from a number of springs. One spring was located in the valley near the cross-roads to Marlin where [?] store stands today. Near the spring stood a large cedar tree and nearby a group of smaller cedar trees. Hence the name of “Cedar Springs”. These springs are near the river and only a few miles south of the spot conceded to be the old site of Vienea. The mail carrier was “Croft Downs”, so Mr. Green Roberts recalls. He was a bachelor and he always seemed to derive special pleasure from a plug of chewing tobacco and an occasional drink of whiskey, and carrying the mail in all kinds of weather. He rode horseback and carried the mail from Marlin through [Viones?] and on to the other communities. Later it was carried from Marlin to Eddy by a negro named John Love. This route went through Chilton and Mooreville.

“The mail carrier's had the Brazos to ford at the Falls, or when it was on a rise if they did not appear on schedule—we knew the old river was on a rise and they could not swim their horses over it. There was a story of Croft Downs trying to swim the river while it was on one of these rises. The water was swift and near the flood stage, when he started across eye-witnesses said they saw the mail carrier, mail and all, slip under the pressure of the current, plunge over the falls and disappear in the deep, whirling water below. A

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party hurried to the 3 rescue, expecting to drag a corpse from its depths. But they were mistaken. The mail carrier, horse and mail, had drifted down past the bend, through treacherous Sumpter Hole, and had climbed out on the west side of the river. The mail went through—after having been delayed only an hour!

“The Brazos bottom at that time was densely timbered and all kinds of wild animals lived in it. There was wild game to satisfy the greatest of hunters. Deer, bear and wolves, as well as all kinds of birds abounded in the timber. While on the banks of the river occasionally an alligator could be seen as he slept in the sun by the bank. This reminds me of a story of my father. It may sound a little far-fetched, but nevertheless it is true. He often hunted fifteen or twenty miles from home on the river. On one of these trips he carried several hunting dogs. They came upon one of these alligators on the river bank and the dogs attacked it. The alligator turned and swallowed the dog. My father immediately stabbed the huge alligator with his large dirt hunting knife, rescued the dog alive, from its stomach. It was all over in just a few minutes, only the time it took to stab the animal through the heart and cut it open and rescue the dog. Another time he killed a bear with this knife.

“It was just a few weeks after they reached Texas that my grandfather [Weathers?] was killed accidentally by the hired man who mistook him for a bear. They were out hunting and had killed a deer, grandfather [Weathers?] had on a coat made of bear skin and was leaning over the deer, skinning it, when the hired man saw him and thinking it was a bear eating the deer, he fired the fatal shot which cost my grandfather his life. He was the 4 first person buried in old Carolina cemetery. Carolina was once a settlement between the present town of Durango and Chilton, some few miles west of the town of Marlin and in what we called West Falls County. Today all that remains is the old cemetery where our loved ones lie. We went to the old Cow Bayou Baptist Church, the minutes dating from its organization are in possession of my daughter, Mrs. Susie Miles, of Chilton. This old church was rebuilt once, the members worshipped there on the banks of the bayou for many years, and at times at old Cottonwood school house, finally building a church on the hill at Mooreville (five miles away), overlooking Cow Bayou, not far from where the early

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Mooreville school house stood. Later lightning struck the church after it had been moved to the hill and it burned to the ground. The congregation met for a number of years at the school house. Some time after the World War, this church dissolved, members having moved away. The Methodist Church established on its present site in 1874 served the community since. Its Sunday School being regularly attended by children and members of other denominations in the community

“The minutes of the old Cow Bayou Baptist Church gives the names of the early settlers of the Chilton-Mooreville community, especially those who came during the ten year period of 1848 to 1859. Reading from these minutes we read as follows: 'The Cow Bayou Baptist Church of Falls County, was organized July 14, [1869?]. The following persons having presented themselves on Cow Bayou: Z. E. Mix, Elizabeth Mix, Rebecca Dixon, Martha A. Herndon and J. [?]. Harris, with their letters and the following brethren and sisters who were baptized during the week previous, namely: Susan A. 5 Brabbin, Laura E. Harris, Mary E. Kirkpatrick, Jospeh Herndon, John T. Moore, Anthoney [?]. Elythe and [?]. F. Kirkpatrick, these desiring to be constituted into a Baptist church and all of them having been baptized upon a public profession of their faith in Christ by a regular Baptist minister, was by their request constituted into a Baptist Church according to the usual forms. J. [?]. Harris was chosen clerk and John McLane, Pastor.

“At the next meeting (fifth Sunday in July, 1859), S. [?]. McCaib, Margaret Moore, Robert Moore, W. Z. Dixon, and Margaret Jackson were received into membership by letter and Cora Ann [lythe?] was Baptized. A month later (fourth Sunday in August, 1859) “Brother John McLane preached at candlelight and Newton B. Maxey (my father) and Lucy Smith joined by faith “and in the following month went down into the waters edge (Cow Bayou) and were baptized.”

“Later minutes reveal other families who came to make this community their home, this settlement extending almost to old Carolina and Durango on the south, to the McLennan County line on the north, and the Bell County line to the river on the west and east. Some

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of these settlers lived deep in the woods where the timber has since been cleared and the towns of Satin and Chilton are located.

“That the Cow Bayou Baptist Church of Falls County, was active and progressive is revealed, in that, as early as 1859, it made application to the Baptist Association for membership; that it was accepted and Robert Moore, Z. E. Mix and W. Z. Dixon were delegates to this association in 1859, as shown by these minutes. Since these minutes throw some light upon who the early settlers were, listed below are additions to the Church for the first eleven years, namely: “Joined, in 1859: [Wm?]. [rabb?], Joshua Smith.” These minutes reveal no services were held in this church in 1860, but that services were held in the various homes. Perhaps the log cabin had not been built in which as a girl I worshipped, I do not recall if I have heard from my elders this fact or not. Perhaps since the Indians were still keeping the settlers in fear it was thought best to have the services in the homes.

“About the time of the breaking out of the [ar?] between the States, the minutes show that the church was still receiving members and some new names appear. “Joined in 1861: Augustus Carback, John [?]. Fortune, Leonard Magee, J. [?]. McCaib, Robert Shields, Thadeons Nixon, A. C. Brandon, Sarah Brandon, Naomi Nix, N. Nix, G. A. Nix.” Again there is a skip in the minutes from August 1861 to November 1863. This was during the war and the best of my memory the community was in such an unsettled state that the minutes were not kept while the war was raging, or if this alone was not the only reason, the church clerk must have been away to the conflict. I was just a very small child as you may note.

“Then in 1863 the minutes started again and again we have new names: “Joined in 1863: B.[H?]. Fugett, O. P., [?]. S., and [?]. T. Fugett, Jane Rayfield, [?]. F. [Roye?] and wife, Mary C. [Roye?]. In 1864 we have the following names which still show that other settlers had come into the community: “Joined in 1864: G. Z. Tarker, Peter Simons, [Catherine?] Vinson, [Alizab?h?] Nixon, Robert Moore, Isaac Mayfield, [Willis?] Roye, 7

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Susan Maxey (my mother), Mary J. Young, Sarah Nichols, Eliza Jane DeGraffenreid, Mary Helen Degraffenreid, Elizabeth Hines, Mary Simons, Mary Tarker, Mary Stephenson and Margaret Nixon.”

“Again another year passes by with no records of any admissions into the church, this was the year 1865. Several called for letters of dismission. Perhaps the closing of the War had something to do again with the work of the church. “Joined in 1866: B. [?]. Martin and wife, E. Martin, Susan Martin, A. B. Blackwell, Lucinda Blackwell, A. E. Brandon, and wife, Sarah Brandon, O. P. Littlefield and wife, Frances Littlefield, Samantha Nix, Marion Nix, Thos. Burnley and “Sister” A. A. Griffin, H. C. McLaughlin, [arah?] Greer, S. J. Moore, Mary Parker.”

“Joined in 1867: W. J. C. Grayson and sister Doranda Grayson,” This is all the new members shown for this year, but a collection was taken to build a new church. The records do not show if one was built then. One notes that each year shows that new families have come into the community by their affiliation with the church.

“Joined in 1868: George L. Wright, Ellen, Mary A. and Ellen [?]. Wright, Sister L. D. Leftin and Thomas [Stolawn?].” An interesting note is here found in the minutes for this year: “following considerable discussion and prayer foot-washing was rejected by a vote of the members. Joined in 1869: J. [?]. Eddins and wife Margaret Eddins, C. Littlefield, Rachael Bronson. Joined in 1870: None.”

“Joined in 1871: Tisel Jackson and H. Jackson, Martha E. Grayson, John and Sarah Burrows, James Williams, William Maxey and sister M. R. 8 Maxey, J. W. McNeely. Joined in 1872: Frances Bruner, N. J. Young, Robert Jones, Wm. and Mary Ruble, Ransford Jones, Thomas Jones, Jesia and John DeGraffenreid, Wm. Littlefield, L. C. and W. F. Martin and four people named Hayes, no initials, were listed: Y. P. and M. A. Pinson Joined in 1873: Harriet Ruble. Joined in 1874: Moses H. and Lenora ann Mears.”

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"Frequently letters of dismission were granted and many received their letters whose names were not listed in the minutes, they probably joined the church and their names failed to be listed, possibly through the changes of the church clerks. To complete the reference to this old Cow Bayou Baptist Church it is well to reflect that the old minutes offer a glimpse into some of the early trials of the pioneer age. Throughout the records of the church "in conference", "labored" and prayed with members for bad behavior pertaining to dancing, drinking, getting drunk, selling whiskey, swearing, stealing cattle, shooting a man, or unbecoming conduct." The church too, in a number of instances, sat as a jury to settle misunderstanding between its members. Human pathos often creeps out, when it is recorded that some members came humbly before the church and asked forgiveness, were forgiven and received with open and loving arms again into the fold—into the care and Watchful protection of the church."

"When father returned from the war, I was nine years old and can remember how the community began to settle rapidly. Many came from the north. [We?] moved near the mouth of Cow Bayou to what is now the [Corruth?] 9 Springs settlement. Among the new emigrants were the Howells, Less, Dixons, Cox and Landrum families.

"In 1890, the San Antonio and [Aransas?] Pass Railroad was built from Cameron to Waco, thereby making the final connecting link to the coast. The new towns sprang up along the road. Chilton was in its path, so the settlement along Cow Bayou moved to the railroad and our new town was named Chilton, For L. [?]. Chilton who owned the first store here. Another mercantile establishment was Crawford and Lane. The old town used to be on the Marlin road, but when the depot was built, the business houses moved nearer the depot. N. R. Flowers also owned a store and the postoffice was in his store for a while. Dane and [Steen?] had a saloon and Gordon Gaither also had a store.

"As a girl I went to school to Mrs. Gordon Gaither who at that time was a Miss Florence Darrow, of Waco, Texas. I will give you some extracts from some notes by Mrs. Gaither on these early days and the coming of the railroad. (Mrs. Gaither passed away last winter,

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1938). She was a lovely character. To quote from her diary: "I claim I am a native Texan, although I was born in Canada. The first I ever knew of life was in Waco, Texas, a few months after I blinked at daylight. There, I grew up, received my education, and got a position as teacher at Durango, Falls County. At that time Durango was the leading community west of the Brazos river in Falls county.

"With the railroad pushing its way through Falls County to Waco, it was my good luck to be the first young woman to ride the train to Waco," 10 (Mrs Gaither writes) "I managed to get to Lott, the nearest station to take the train, and to my chagrin when I got there, I was the only woman at the station, and it looked like an army of working men, men of all types, tall, stocky, some rough looking, with greasy overalls and whiskers hair and hats. They talked loudly and I got the impression half of them were drunk."

"Mrs. Gaither asked, "Reckon its safe for me to get on the train with those men?" "Of course", was the reply. "Railroads are supposed to be safe, and the conductor and engineer will take care of you." "I kinda' blinked, bolstered up my courage and went aboard. The train whistled and men—a train-load—climbed on. A few minutes later we were on the way—not going as fast as we should as a rain had damaged the track, so we just rolled along. In a little while after I got aboard, I was having the time of my life. The men were quite gentlemanly and considerate and being a young woman and the only one on the train, I received plenty of attention:

"Mrs. Gaither's diary continues. "After we had traveled an hour, some one called out 'Chilton'. The train came to a stop, and I looked around and couldn't see a thing but a mesquite thicket, it just looked like a stop in the road. Chilton's stores were three-quarters of a mile up the hill on a spot near where my home stands today. It could not be seen for the mesquite trees and being up the hill from the train. It was nearly dark when the train reached Waco, and some of my family met me, and after I reached home a thousand questions were asked. How we managed to get along on the new railroad without going into a creek 11 or a dump, etc.?"

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"Mrs. [aither?] was elected to teach school at Chilton, where she resided with some of the other teachers in the Gaine's home. After teaching until the school term closed, she was re-elected to teach at Durango, where she taught two full terms, but after two years, she again taught in Chilton, and was assistant to A. [?]. Eddins, who later became the superintendent of the Falls county schools. The trustees of that day were John Bryant, John Sylvester and [Sam?] Gaither; and as Professor Eddins used to say, Gordon Gaither stole one of the best school teachers Falls county ever had when he married her."

"On the first day of January, 1874, I married Benjamin M. Lockered, a native of Georgia, who worked for John [lliott?] in a general mercantile business. To us were born seven children, namely: Mrs [Bertie?] Lands, Chilton; Mrs. J.C. Aikens, Chilton; Mrs. S. E. Miles (with whom I make my home), Chilton; J.R. Lockered of Hillsboro, Texas; Newton B. Lockered of Bryan, Texas; Mrs. J. L. Allen of Mart, Texas. My husband passed away in February, of 1895.

"And so the past as it rises up before me looks as if it were a dream, times are so changed. As we look back over our little community history it is the history of other communities, and these other communities make up the whole of our history and country. There have been lulls in the trek of mankind toward civilization. All efforts to stay the hands of destiny failed, and the men with the modern trend of a newer civilization moves on. Whether he is happier or not does not 12 alter circumstances. To us who have been here through the turn of the century, we see from both viewpoints.

"But destiny is still on the march. Some of the events we do not like. We could serenely cling to the old traditions—the old ways. I feel that this is especially true of us of the older generation. On the other hand there are many dissatisfied among the younger set with things as they are. Whether they should be satisfied—whether it is their fault that they are not more contented, or whether some destiny over which they have no control rules them, the facts are, changes in the old order of things are upon us. The demands of a more

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complex society remains to be solved by the younger generation. We have done our part, and we were happy in doing it. We lived simply and enjoyed living for the very joy of life!"